

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

HEREWITH FULL TEXT JEREMIAH O'LEARY WASHINGTON STAR-NEWS
DECEMBER 19 ARTICLE HEADED "HENRY KISSINGER'S COURT OF
THE SKIES":

COVERING THE TRAVELS OF SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGE
PRESIDENT NIXON'S MAN-IN-MOTION, IS A LITTLE BIT LIKE
ATTENDING AN AIRBORNE PUNCH-AND-JUDY SHOW.

THE NEWSMEN ACCOMPANYING KISSINGER HAVE DUAL ROLES. THEY
ARE PARTICIPANTS, UP TO A POINT, ACTING AS A SORT OF
GREEK CHORUS IN COUNTERPOINT TO THE STAR. AND THEY ARE
AN AUDIENCE AS BEST THEY CAN BE AT THE NARROW STAGE
AFFORDED BY THE AISLE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL 707 WHERE
KISSINGER MAKES HIS APPEARANCES.

ON THE ROAD NOW SINCE DEC. 8, KISSINGER HAS PERFECTED A
PATTERN THAT HAS THE PRESS DROOLING LIKE PAVLOV'S
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DOGS EVERY TIME HIS PLANE TAKES OFF. AS SOON AS THE

WHEELS ARE UP AND LOCKED, THE REPORTERS, ISOLATED FROM KISSINGER AND HIS AIDES IN A SEPARATE REAR CABIN, HAVE LEARNED TO WATCH THE CABIN DOOR FOR THE STAR TO APPEAR.

INVARIABLY, KISSINGER EMERGES WITHOUT FANFARE AND IN SHIRT SLEEVES. BY ACCIDENT OR DESIGN, THE APPEARANCE IS ALWAYS MADE WHILE THE PLANE IS STILL CLIMBING AND THE ENGINE NOISE IS AT ITS SCREAMING PEAK. HIS PATTERN IS TO MEANDER ABOUT HALFWAY THROUGH THE CABIN, THEN LEAN AGAINST A SEAT TO HOLD COURT.

NEVER KNOWING WHEN THE CURTAIN WILL GO UP FOR WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY A PERFORMANCE RATHER THAN A PRESS CONFERENCE, THE PRESS CORPS HAS BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO READING, WRITING, PLAYING GIN OR NAPPING WITH ONLY ONE EYE. THE OTHER EYE WATCHES THAT DOOR. WHEN IT OPENS, THERE IS AN UNSEEMLY BUT NECESSARY SCRAMBLE FOR POSITIONS AND THE SHOW BEGINS.

AS IF IN THE PROMPTER'S BOX, BUT SILENTLY TAKING NOTES BEHIND KISSINGER IS GEORGE S. VEST, THE AFFABLE PRESS SPOKESMAN WHO SEEMS TO HAVE AN ALMOST COSMIC THRESHOLD OF PAIN AND A TOTAL COMMAND OF CALCULATED AMBIGUITY. KISSINGER HIMSELF RANGES FROM EXTREME CANDOR TO DIPLOMATIC JARGON DEPENDING ON HIS MOOD AND ON WHETHER A REPORTER HAS MANAGED TO PINK HIM IN A SENSITIVE SPOT WITH A QUESTION.

KISSINGER CAN AFFORD DIRECT ANSWERS SINCE THE AUDIENCE HAS AGREED IN ADVANCE NOT TO BOO. IN OTHER WORDS, THE GROUND RULES ARE "BACKGROUND" WHICH MEANS THAT KISSINGER WILL NOT BE QUOTED UNLESS THERE IS SPECIFIC AGREEMENT AND THAT RARELY OCCURS.

KISSINGER FANCIES HIMSELF A BANTERER, ENJOYS IT AND IS GOOD AT IT.

AFTER THE BANTER-PHASE, THE SECOND ACT FINDS KISSINGER FIELDING A BARRAGE OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ABSTRUSE FOREIGN UNCLASSIFIED

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POLICY PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE MADE THE SECRETARY A VIRTUAL NOMAD IN HIS THREE MONTHS IN OFFICE: NATO, THE FRENCH, OIL, ENERGY, KILOMETER 101, EAST-WEST TROOP CUTS, DETENTE, THE PEACE CONFERENCE. THE QUESTIONS SHOWER ON KISSINGER LIKE RAIN. IN THIS PHASE, THE NEWSMEN BECOME HARVARD STUDENTS AND HE THE PROFESSOR CASTING PEARLS OF WISDOM MORE IN THE VULGATE THAN IN THE MEASURED EXPRESSIONS HE USES AT HIS FORMAL PRESS CONFERENCES.

THE THIRD ACT IS WHERE PUNCH GETS IT IN THE NECK FROM THE REST OF THE CHARACTERS. IN THIS PHASE COME THE HARD QUESTIONS AND IT IS THEN THAT KISSINGER'S GUARD SOMETIMES COMES DOWN. THE LAUGH-LINES ON HIS FACE DISAPPEAR AND

THERE MAY BE COUNTER-ATTACKS. A REPORTER MIGHT BE ASKED WHAT HE WOULD HAVE DONE FACED WITH SOME CONTINGENCY UNDER SPIRITED REVIEW.

HE DOES NOT STORM, OR RANT, OR GO ICILY COLD AT THE DARING SOULS WHO VENTURE TO ASK THEM. BUT HIS EYES REMAIN FIXED ON THE INTERROGATOR, THE LOWER LIP PROTODES AND HE ANSWERS WITH A MIXTURE OF CONTROLLED IMPATIENCE AND INTENSITY.

PETULANCE SHOWS AND HE HAS BEEN KNOWN TO INQUIRE WHERE THE QUESTIONER HAD BEEN POSTED BEFORE AS IF SEEING HIM ON THE PLANE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

THE QUESTIONS KISSINGER DOES NOT LIKE ARE SAVED UNTIL LAST BECAUSE THE SCRIPT USUALLY FINDS HIM RETREATING TO HIS SANCTORUM UP FORWARD WHEN THE TOUCHY PHASE BEGINS. THE LAST ACT FINDS KISSINGER EDGING AWAY FROM THE REPORTERS AS IF HE HAD STAYED LONGER THAN HE INTENDED. WHEN THE DOOR CLOSES BEHIND HIM, THE TYPE-LAUNCHES INTO THE FINE ART OF LAP-WRITING STORIES.

THE PRESS HARDLY SEES KISSINGER ON OTHER OCCASIONS. ONCE LANDED, KISSINGER IS SWEEPED AWAY IN A CLOUD OF OFFICIALDOM AND IS LARGELY AS SEGREGATED FROM HIS TRAVELING PRESS CORPS AS IF THEY HAD NEVER MET THE MAN. VEST GIVES HALLWAY BRIEFINGS IN HOTELS AND CONFERENCE UNCLASSIFIED

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HALLS, BUT KISSINGER IS INVOLVED AND SEQUESTERED WITH THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE OF THE WORLD WITH PRESSING BUSINESS. (END TEXT). RUSH

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